

April 2014

USDA e-News

California Edition



United States Department of Agriculture

Welcome to USDA e-News, California Edition, a multi-agency newsletter providing California's producers and other interested parties with current information.

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Drought Resources

With California in its worst drought in the state's 160 years of record-keeping, USDA is working with federal and state partners to provide a collaborative response. For the most complete and up-to-date information on available resources, please visit the USDA Drought Resource webpage at <http://www.usda.gov/drought> and the California Department of Food and Agriculture Drought Resource webpage at <http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/drought>.

Farm Service Agency Offers Several Disaster Assistance Programs

Farm Service Agency (FSA) has a variety of programs available to help farmers and ranchers impacted by disasters, including the state's drought. Complete details on FSA Disaster Assistance can be found at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=landing>.

Click on the programs below for additional details, or visit the FSA Disaster Assistance Program. Please note signups for livestock programs begin in April.

- [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire with retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to Oct. 1, 2011. **Sign-up will begin on or before April 15, 2014.**
- [Livestock Indemnity Payments \(LIP\)](#) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law, including wolves and avian predators with retroactive authority to cover eligible livestock losses back to Oct. 1, 2011. **Sign-up will begin on or before April 15, 2014.**

- [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish \(ELAP\)](#) provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses not covered by LFP and LIP. **Signups will be announced in near future.**
- [Tree Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#) provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters with retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to Oct. 1, 2011. **Signups will be announced in near future.**
- [Farm Storage Facility Loan Program \(FSFL\)](#) provides low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The program was enhanced to include 23 new categories of eligible equipment for fruit and vegetable producers, and makes it easier for farmers and ranchers around the country to finance the equipment they need to grow and expand. The maximum loan amount is \$500,000.

NRCS Conservation Drought Assistance to California Farmers & Ranchers

California has seen many droughts come and go, but 2014 is creating especially dire conditions for the State's farmers and ranchers. Information on [NRCS Drought Assistance](#) can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ca/newsroom/features/>.

Drought Assistance from Rural Development

Rural Development has several programs that may help rural communities, businesses, ag producers, farm workers and others impacted by California's ongoing drought. Opportunities include \$3 million in Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants (ECWAG) to help rural communities whose water supply is at risk. Additional help is available for homeowners that need help drilling a well or connecting to a community water system, food banks that anticipate increased demand, ag producers wanting to offset ag irrigation costs, and others. For a list of available programs, and local contacts, visit Rural Development's website <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca>.

Updates

Nominations to the Administrative Committee for Pistachios

The Administrative Committee for Pistachios (Committee), which administers the Federal marketing order for pistachios grown in California, Arizona and New Mexico, is conducting elections to seat new members. USDA is encouraging eligible women, minorities, and people with disabilities to consider running for office. If you are interested in increasing your involvement in the pistachio industry, please consider running for a position on the Committee. If you would like more information on the marketing order or the nomination and election process, please contact Bob Klein, Manager of the Committee, at (559) 255-6480, or Andrea Ricci, USDA, at (559) 487-5901. Additional information is available online at <http://www.acpistachios.org>

California Walnut Growers to Vote on Marketing Order

California walnut growers will vote **April 1-19, 2014** on whether or not to continue their Federal marketing order. Growers who have produced walnuts in California from Sept. 1, 2012, through Aug. 31, 2013, are eligible to vote. USDA would consider continuing the marketing order if two-

thirds of the growers, or growers representing two-thirds of the volume of walnuts in the referendum, vote in favor of continuance. Notice of the referendum was published in the March 14, 2014, *Federal Register*. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will mail ballots and voting instructions to all growers of record. Eligible growers who do not receive a ballot may contact Andrea Ricci, at USDA, AMS, 2202 Monterey Street, Suite 102B, Fresno, CA 93721-3129; Andrea.Ricci@ams.usda.gov; phone (559) 487-5901 or Fax (559) 487-5906.

Sales Closing Dates Near for Crop Insurance Programs

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds producers that the sales closing dates for spring crop insurance programs are almost here. Producers should make sure to sign up, review, or change their crop policy before the date has passed. The last day to buy or change a policy for Nursery is **May 1, 2014**. Producers are encouraged to contact a crop insurance agent as soon as possible or you can find an agent on the RMA website at

<http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html>.

Final 2012 Census of Agriculture Report Coming in May

Access your first peek at 2012 Census of Agriculture results now with preliminary data. Visit www.agcensus.usda.gov for Census data highlights including farm numbers, land in farms, and more. USDA NASS will release the full 2012 Census of Agriculture report in May 2014. The final report will provide even more detailed information for California, providing data on all farm operators and data down to the county level. The publication will also provide new insights into the agriculture industry, reporting new or expanded data on Internet access, regional food systems, biomass production, agro-forestry and equine. Contact NASS at (888) 424-7828 or our Pacific Regional Office at (916) 498-5161 if you would like more information on the Census of Agriculture release.

NRCS Unveils New Website for Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) unveiled a new website for their Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) that includes helpful graphics and a step-by-step approach to the program. EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat. View the website here:

https://prod.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ca/programs/financial/?cid=nrcs144p2_063939.

Funding Opportunities

New Deadline Announced for Value-Added Producer Grants

Rural Development announced the application deadline for the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program has been extended until **April 8, 2014**. The extension was provided to implement changes to the VAPG program that were included in the 2014 Farm Bill. Specifically, priority points are now available for eligible Veteran Farmers and Ranchers. The extended deadline is valid for all applicants, regardless if they are a veteran. As well, applicants that have already submitted an application but wish to revise it may do so. For complete information on the program, please visit Rural Development's website:

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_VAPG.html. Questions can also be directed to Karen Firestein at karen.firestein@ca.usda.gov or 530-792-5829.

Reports and Publications

NASS Reports

[Vegetable Review](#) (04/03/2014)

[Crop Production](#) (04/11/2014)

[Grape Acreage Summary & Detailed Report](#) (04/15/2014)

[Fruit & Nut Review](#) (04/18/2014)

[Field Crop Review](#) (04/18/2014)

[Almond Acreage Report](#) (04/24/2014)

[Livestock Review](#) (04/30/2014)

[Poultry Report](#) (04/30/2014)

Other Activities & Events

USDA Webinar Series for the Fruit and Vegetable Industry

The [Agricultural Marketing Service's Fruit and Vegetable Program](#) invites you to take part in a series of free, interactive webinars on our many programs and services. At each webinar, you'll hear a presentation from a USDA expert on a specific topic, be introduced to our staff, and take part in an interactive question and answer session. These informative webinars are designed for fruit and vegetable growers, packers, shippers, processors, wholesalers, and retailers of all sizes. Registration is required and space is limited. Log on today to register – it's your first step to learning how we can work together to meet your unique business needs. If you miss a webinar, just visit our [Webinar Archive](#) to watch it online. If you have any question about our webinar series or USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, please contact Christopher Purdy at (202) 720-3209 or christopher.purdy@ams.usda.gov.

Upcoming Webinars:

An Overview of the PACA Complaint Process *	April 30, 2014 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time	To register. http://bit.ly/LypyRg
USDA Fresh Produce Inspection 101	May 22, 2014 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time	To register. http://bit.ly/1kUdwi2
An Introduction to the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) *	June 26, 2014 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time	To register. http://bit.ly/1b1QnJZ

About Us

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

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Farm Service Agency (FSA)

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Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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Risk Management Agency (RMA)

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Rural Development (RD)

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Contact Us

If you would like to receive a copy of future newsletters or if you have relevant information for California producers that you want to include in a future issue of this newsletter, please email one of the contacts listed below. Please be advised that not all activities may be published.

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